

Road Primary School

Hartwell Road, Roade, Northampton, NN7 2NT

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders and governors are sharply focused and effective in making sure all pupils achieve even more in every year group and that teaching further improves.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to develop within the school. They provide a good balance of challenge and support.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and show excellent relationships and behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe in school and enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their good punctuality and high attendance.
- Teaching is generally good and some is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and develop good working relationships in the classroom.
- New staff are already making a positive impact on learning.
- Children in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 make a strong start to their education and are well prepared for the next stage.
- Pupils achieve well overall, and make excellent progress in reading throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given the support they need to make good progress.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to ensure that they make the maximum progress in all areas.
- Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to observe and work alongside excellent practitioners in order to improve their own skills and classroom practice.
- Teachers' questions and marking do not consistently test pupils' understanding or guide their work closely enough to ensure their more rapid progress.
- Subject leaders are not fully aware of which areas within their subjects are not as strong as others, so they are not secure in leading improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons and parts of lessons. Six of these were observed jointly with the executive headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils at break times and lunchtimes and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with different groups of pupils, including the school council. Inspectors listened to a cross section of pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, governors and staff. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including: the school's information on how well the pupils are achieving, improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also looked at minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work to see what progress they make and to judge the quality of the marking and feedback.
- Inspectors took account of 30 responses received from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, inspectors spoke to parents in the playground, at the start of the school day and in school.
- The inspectors also considered 19 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Simon Harbrow

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Roade Primary is a slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the school, at one in 25 pupils, is far fewer than the one in six pupils usually found in schools of this type.
- Very few pupils are eligible for the pupil premium – one in 10 pupils in the school compared with one in four found nationally. There are very few eligible pupils in most year groups. The pupil premium is extra funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are in care.
- Most pupils are White British.
- All children in the early years provision attend full time.
- There have been changes of headteacher, other leaders and many staff since the last inspection. Several staff are newly qualified.
- An executive headteacher holds responsibility for the school until September 2015. He took up his appointment in January 2015 and remains headteacher of his own school. In the term prior to his appointment, a substantive headteacher was in post. Recruitment for a new headteacher is currently taking place.
- The school is due to undergo expansion which will double its size.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is currently in partnership with Preston Hedges Primary School, which was judged outstanding in its latest Ofsted inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the current strengths of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the most-able pupils are always challenged to reach the highest standards of which they are capable
 - pupils are asked questions in lessons which challenge their thinking and require them to explain how they arrive at their answers so that they clarify their understanding of the subject
 - marking is consistently good across the school and in line with the school's marking policy so that pupils learn more and make more rapid progress.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers on teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - improving subject leaders' skills in interpreting data on pupils' progress and attainment so that they can better analyse and understand the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and lead improvement
 - tracking the progress of all groups of pupils to make sure that all are achieving to their potential
 - teachers having more opportunities to observe best practice in teaching and learning so they can improve their own practice.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Despite considerable changes in leadership and staffing, leaders have maintained a strong school ethos ensuring pupils' positive attitudes to learning and a good quality of teaching. Last term, the substantive headteacher gave the school clear direction. Currently, the executive headteacher and partnership with another outstanding school are taking the school further forward.
- In a very short time, the executive headteacher has worked with the governors in setting the right improvement priorities. The impact of this leadership is shown in subject leaders' improved practice in monitoring and evaluating pupils' work, but it is too soon to evaluate the effect on pupils' achievement.
- Collaboration with the partner, outstanding school is planned, but it is too early to evaluate the impact on improving teachers' practice, the work of subject leaders and pupils' progress.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching closely and there is effective support and training provided for teachers to improve their practice. Consequently, the improvements made to teaching were seen to be having a clear impact on pupils' rapidly improving progress.
- Morale among leaders, staff and governors is high. They accurately identify the school's strengths and the areas for development. Consequently, inspectors observed a strong sense of purpose and determination to improve their practice among staff reflected in, for example, some outstanding teaching seen during the inspection.
- The school ensures pupils have equal opportunity to succeed. Consequently, the small pupil premium budget is allocated carefully and effectively. Its use was observed in focused support for individual, eligible pupils and to enhance learning opportunities for them in after-school clubs or residential visits ensuring their good personal development and progress.
- A broad range of interesting subjects and topics encourages pupils in their learning. Learning opportunities are extended and enlivened by many clubs, special events and visits, including residential trips for older pupils and 'theme days'. Pupils gain worthwhile experience from these opportunities.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes qualities such as kindness, care and respect for others. As a result, pupils are considerate towards each other and relationships between adults and pupils are good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of religious belief and how to be a responsible member of the school community. The school promotes pupils' understanding of key British values, that discrimination is not acceptable and that there should be equal opportunity for all. They are well prepared for life in modern British society.
- The leader of the early years provision works with parents and other early years providers to ensure children have as smooth as possible a transition into school. Consequently, children settle well and are ready to learn more quickly.
- Subject leaders and others with leadership responsibilities are developing their skills well. They receive support and training and are currently making good use of the opportunities provided by the school partnership. They produce subject plans that identify appropriate priorities that relate closely to whole-school priorities. However, their skills in interpreting and using the data on pupils' attainment and tracking progress are not yet developed well enough to enable them to have full impact on improving provision and achievement in their subjects.
- Leaders ensure all staff are trained in identifying pupils at risk of harm. All procedures for safeguarding pupils are carried out appropriately and meet statutory requirements. As a result, pupils feel safe at school

and are right to do so.

- The local authority provides the school with effective support, training for governors and staff and challenge. Arrangements for the executive headship are working well.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding to pay for training for staff and coaches to deliver physical education of high quality to pupils. These opportunities, combined with a wide variety of after-school clubs, is having a positive impact on pupils' skills and physical well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body plays an effective role in school improvement. It knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is actively involved in monitoring pupils' achievement from close analysis and interpretation of the data on their performance.
 - Governors undertake a range of training opportunities to help them judge the work of the school for themselves.
 - They are active in the recruitment and appointment of staff. They ensure that all appointments and internal promotions are of benefit to the school and further its improvement.
 - Governors understand what the quality of teaching is. They oversee a robust system for managing staff performance. They apply a clear link between teachers' competence in enabling pupils to make good progress and progression up the pay scales.
 - Governors meet all statutory obligations, particularly those relating to the safe recruitment of staff and the safeguarding of pupils.
 - The governing body checks that the school's finances are allocated to support pupils' learning and progress. Finance is matched to improvement priorities and carefully managed and monitored.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In all lessons observed and around the school, pupils' behaviour was good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and show an obvious enjoyment in lessons and at playtime. This is due to the exciting learning activities observed in some classes and the vibrant energy and enthusiasm of many of the staff.
- Pupils say the staff are caring and they trust them. One pupil said how easy it was to talk to teachers or classroom assistants if ever worried or upset. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive.
- Pupils are proud of their school, their achievements and their exciting topic work. They enjoy the wide range of stimulating learning activities as well as the sports and clubs outside lessons.
- Staff, pupils and parents spoken to agreed with inspectors' findings that behaviour is good throughout the school. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare; pupils were unable to think of any such incidents. Pupils said that should there be any bullying, they were very confident that staff would deal with it quickly.
- Some parents do not think that bullying is dealt with effectively, but inspectors could find no evidence to endorse that view.
- Attendance is above the national average. School action to support any pupil with attendance difficulties is effective.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They know the different forms that bullying can take, including on mobile phones and the internet, and learn how to manage such situations. The school carefully logs these very rare occurrences and the impact of the action taken.
- Older pupils look after younger pupils in the playground and take their responsibilities seriously. There is a 'friendship bench' in the playground which pupils can use if they feel lonely or upset and they know someone will look after them.
- Parents and carers are very positive about behaviour in the school. Pupils are aware of possible discrimination against pupils who may seem different from most pupils. They are considerate of the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and include them in all aspects of school life.
- Safeguarding processes meet statutory requirements and effective policies and practices are followed by all staff and pupils. The school rigorously checks references and records of new staff prior to appointing them.
- Parents and staff think that pupils are well cared for and are safe in school. It provides a safe, secure environment that is valued and appreciated by all pupils. School records show that this has been the case for a long time.

The quality of teaching is good

- After a period of staffing changes when teaching was less effective, it is again good and often outstanding. Teachers have positive relationships with pupils who, consequently, respect them, work hard and behave well. Classrooms are orderly, purposeful and productive. Learning activities interest and engage pupils. Teachers' enthusiasm in the learning undertaken is often transferred to pupils who, consequently, make good progress.
- Teachers typically plan interesting learning activities of all kinds. For example, in Year 6 pupils were taking part in a 'Greek day' and were enacting the Labours of Hercules to reinforce their understanding. Year 5 pupils were so enthused by work on the Northampton Ridgeback Dragon that, at times, they became completely silent because they were so engrossed in recording their work.
- Many classrooms have interesting resource areas for the pupils to experience. In the Reception classroom, for example, a gingerbread house built by the teacher, in which the children could play, proved very popular. The children went on to make gingerbread houses in cooking as part of a current topic and gained worthwhile experience from doing so. A 'tomb' in Year 5 and a 'cave' for Year 3 provided stimulating resources for pupils to explore and motivated them to write. Writing and literacy are frequently prompted by such resources and are well taught.
- Teachers use other resources well, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance their explanations and to make lessons more stimulating. Some good opportunities are taken for pupils to use computers and iPads to help their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils were able to film their drama of 'The Labours of Hercules' on iPads.
- Pupils are told clearly what they are meant to learn and are given good oral feedback on their work. In some classes, they are encouraged to respond to marking and improve their work from the guidance given. However, written marking is not consistently good, particularly in showing pupils how to improve, and the school's marking policy is not applied well by some staff. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to assess each other's work and to collaborate in improving it.
- Teachers question pupils well in some lessons to test their understanding. However, such good practice is

not consistent across the school and pupils are, sometimes, not challenged well enough to explain their thinking. Consequently, misunderstandings remain.

- The teaching of reading is particularly effective with pupils becoming fluent very quickly due to well-taught phonics (sounds and their corresponding letters). Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are successfully encouraged and supported to develop an extensive vocabulary. Good teaching ensured that the quality of pupils' written work was often very expressive, both in content and presentation.
- Imaginative teaching ensures pupils' good progress in mathematics. For example, in one lesson seen, the short problem-solving activity the pupils were given encouraged lively discussion and stimulated the pupils to think more deeply about the topic.
- Teachers usually make work challenging for all pupils. However, occasionally, the most-able pupils are given work that is too easy and does not fully challenge them. Consequently, they do not make the more rapid progress that they could.
- Targeted help from skilled teaching assistants makes a strong contribution to pupils' good progress and to their personal development. Consequently, pupils, particularly those of lower ability including some with special educational needs, are closely supported and achieve well.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is well thought out and effective. Training is helping them to improve their skills by working with the partner school.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Staffing difficulties, now resolved, adversely affected pupils' progress in Year 6 in 2014. Currently, the school's more rigorous monitoring since September last shows assessment of pupils' progress to be higher at all levels and in all subjects. Teaching is good and is enabling pupils at all ages to achieve well. Inspection findings fully endorsed the school's progress data.
- In 2014, attainment at Key Stage 2 was slightly ahead of the national average, except in mathematics. Overall, results were a little below those of the previous year.
- Currently, all pupils are making good progress at both key stages. Changes in teaching staff at Key Stage 2 are having a significant impact on improving standards and ensuring pupils make, at the very least, the nationally expected levels of progress.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and have attained above-average standards since the previous inspection. Current work indicates a similar standard.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Less-able readers are well supported. Particularly effective teaching of phonics enables pupils to develop good phonic skills. In the 2014 phonics screening check, nearly all Year 1 pupils achieved the nationally expected standard and many exceeded it. Results show a three-year rising trend.
- Pupils through the school are achieving well in all the subjects they study. Inspectors found some high-quality work in all other subjects. Pupils' use of tablet computers in a variety of subjects is particularly effective in showing their depth of understanding and impressive presentation of their work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress and are achieving well. They are well supported and systems to monitor the effectiveness of that support are effective.
- The most-able pupils achieve well, but are not fully challenged to reach even better standards in some lessons. The proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching or surpassing Level 5 in the national tests in 2014 was a

little ahead of national results in reading, writing and use of English grammar, punctuation and spelling but slightly behind in mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2014, the proportion of the most able attaining or exceeding Level 3 was ahead of national results in writing and mathematics, and well ahead in reading.

- In 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 to report, reliably, on their progress and attainment in mathematics, reading and writing. School data for current Year 6 disadvantaged pupils show good progress for these pupils with all on target to reach at least Level 4 or above in all subjects by the end of the year. Inspection findings endorsed these data as accurate.
- Most parents who expressed a view consider that their children are making good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Good teaching helps children in the Reception class to make good progress. Staff use their understanding of children's past achievements to good effect in directing what the children should learn next in each area of learning.
- Children develop the ability to learn both independently and in partnership with others. They make good progress because of the interesting and exciting learning activities which are provided for them.
- When they start school, many of the children have levels of knowledge and understanding which, although broadly typical for the age, often show weak skills in speaking and listening and a poor vocabulary. Children make consistently good progress in the Reception class and, by the time they start Year 1, most have reached a good level of development.
- Children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and they settle to their work quickly and happily. This helps them to make good progress.
- Leaders closely check the quality of children's work so that they know the strengths and areas which need improving. They use effective systems to track children's progress and to plan new learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121854
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449625

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Abbott
Headteacher	Antony Witheyman (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
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